



NUGGETS' BIG COMEBACK
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Voice of the Rocky Mountain Empire

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DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Figures take off

2017 departs as busiest year in history of 22-year-old transportation hub



Travelers wait to get through security at Denver International Airport on Wednesday. Andy Cross, The Denver Post

By Tamara Chuang The Denver Post

Denver International Airport's popularity soared in 2017, with the airport hitting record highs. Of the 100 busiest travel days in DIA's 22-year history, 76 happened this year. There's a simple reason for that, airport officials said. "A lot more people start and end trips here because there's a lot more people living here," said Patrick Heck, DIA's chief commercial officer, who oversees revenue. DIA's traffic is mimicking the growth of the region, which helped the state rank seventh highest for growth rates nationwide last year. But it's not just about population growth. And it's not really about more flights — the number of new flights grew just 1 percent or 275,000 from last year. But airlines have brought in larger planes that can haul more people. "And what airlines have done is put bigger planes here," Heck said. "United is flying 787s from

here and San Francisco. And airlines are able to fill them more. This all translates to what you see here now: a lot more passengers are coming through." Larger planes and more flights are a sign that the industry values Denver, said Mike Boyd, with Boyd Group International, an Evergreen market research firm that tracks the airline industry. "Nationwide, (passenger) growth is only going to be up 3 percent this year. But Denver is going to be double that," Boyd said. "Historically, if the economy grows 3 percent, airlines grow 3 percent. But they're not doing that anymore. They're only adding seats where they can make the most money, and obviously that means they're making more money in Denver." Travel at DIA is also much more beneficial to the local economy than Hartsfield-Jackson airport is to Atlanta's. Hartsfield-Jackson, home of Delta Air Lines, is the nation's busiest airport, Boyd said.

DIA's 5 busiest days since the beginning
Based on the number of travelers arriving, leaving or connecting at Denver International Airport, 76 of the top 100 days in the airport's history were in 2017. Here are the top five:

June 30	197,276
July 21	196,806
July 28	196,755
July 7	196,526
July 14	196,189

Source: Denver International Airport

DIA » 5A

FEDERAL CHANGES

Rush is on to prepay property taxes before deductions depart

By Joe Rubino and Jesse Paul The Denver Post

County treasurers' offices across the Front Range are reporting a deluge of foot traffic unprecedented for this time of year, and the tax overhaul Congress adopted last week is the reason. Under the Republican-spon-

sored tax bill, signed by President Donald Trump on Friday, the deduction taxpayers can take for state and local taxes they pay will be capped at \$10,000 starting Jan. 1. The limit applies to any combination of property, income and sales taxes. Seeking to duck that cap — by TAXES » 16A



Marjorie Schaffner is one of the residents waiting in line to prepay their 2018 property taxes Wednesday at the Boulder County Courthouse. Paul Aiken, Daily Camera

MENTAL ILLNESS

Lines for evals undue

Those in need of treatment and accused of crimes are waiting up to four times as long as legally allowed.

By Jennifer Brown The Denver Post

People with mental illness who are accused of crimes in Colorado are waiting up to four times as long as legally allowed for evaluations and treatment because the system is so overwhelmed, their attorneys say. Colorado is bound by a 2012 lawsuit settlement to conduct mental competency evaluations or begin treatment for people found incompetent to stand trial within 28 days of a judge's order. But for the second time in six months, the state has revealed it is failing to meet the requirements of the federal settlement. Court orders for mental competency evaluations are outpacing capacity at an "unabating rate," clogging the system and forcing people to languish longer in lock-up, according to a legal letter written by the Colorado Department of Human Services. In June 2016, the system received 146 competency evaluation orders and 54 orders for "restoration," which is mental health treatment to restore people found incompetent so that they can then face charges. A year later, in June, the system received 215 competency orders and 93 restoration orders — increases of 47 percent and 72 percent, respectively. The numbers have remained high in the months since. While Colorado now has plans to spend upward of \$20 million to address the backlog, partly by

MENTAL » 8A

FEMA SELLING TRAILERS DESPITE NEED IN TEXAS

FEMA typically spends up to \$150,000 apiece on the trailers it leases to disaster victims, then auctions them despite almost 8,000 Texas applicants needing housing help. »17A

New Chipotle CEO. Here are five candidates who could help the Denver-based company turn its fortunes around. »14A



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